

LAGUNA BEACH

SEPTEMBER 2017 » LAGUNABEACHMAGAZINE.COM

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COLOR IS ON THE MENU

Playful hues bring new life to neutral kitchens.

By Victoria Kertz



Arianna Noppenberger recommends placing a bowl of fruit in a prominent place to try out the hues before adding permanent color.

LIFE REVOLVES AROUND THE KITCHEN. MEALS and conversations begin and end there, as do morning coffees and midnight snacks. While it may be one of the most visited rooms in the house, it isn't always prioritized when it comes to showcasing personal style. Aside from the fact that it's a utilitarian place, enhancing it can be costly—an assemblage of new appliances and stylish countertops requires quite an investment.

A pop of color can instantly update your kitchen when even a minor renovation is out of the question. Whether it's a fresh coat of paint on aging cabinets or a welcoming sign on a pantry door, a small injection of color creates a renewed space. Chances are, your kitchen is already a perfectly plain canvas, ready for you to select a new shade and play artist.

Dramatic color additions are not usually what homeowners imagine when they begin their design journey. "Clients tend to go neutral," says Laguna Beach-based interior designer Arianna Noppenberger, adding that her customers tend

to be afraid of including color right away.

She suggests starting small when it comes to color. Install a vibrant backsplash or floor tiles with a tinge of hue. "Paint," she suggests, when clients are unwilling to take a risk. "Absolutely anything can be done with fresh paint."

To determine where to start, analyze your kitchen needs. Are the drawer knobs and other hardware outdated? Are your dish towels from the 20th century? These are tiny places where you can opt for a new hue.

If your appliances are stainless steel or bright white, you may want to begin with small bursts of sunny yellow to see if the cheerful shade is for you. Place lemon-yellow dish towels next to your oven. Or if your lighting needs a lift, try a whimsical colored chandelier.

Noppenberger believes oranges, yellows and reds are the best complements to modern grays, whites or beiges. While trendy turquoise might be pretty, the designer suggests sticking to colors that naturally occur in what we eat.

The design force behind the breathtaking Obagi Skin Health Institute on Coast Highway, Noppenberger says she is inspired by European design, and that traditionally warm colors "lift up the mood and stimulate the appetite." They're perfect companions in a kitchen.

When creating looks for her clients all over Southern California and as far away as Trinidad and Tobago, Noppenberger's aesthetic is modern and contemporary. Simplicity is key. "My rooms are minimalist, but warm. And, above all, timeless—that's my main goal," she says.

In her own kitchen, Noppenberger hangs wall art to add pops of color. Fresh flowers adorn her countertop as well, which she says is an inexpensive way to switch out colors to match your mood.

The most functional way to try out a color? With food, of course. Fill a bowl with fruit that contains a desired color and set it in a prominent place. If it enriches the room, add more of the same with small appliances, vases or candles. Sometimes the smallest investments make the biggest impacts.